

## **VISUAL RESOURCES**

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### **LANDSCAPES AND VIEWSHEDS**

62 comments. Most comments defined bison viewing as a major element of visitation to Yellowstone National Park and that without them, the park experience would be greatly diminished. A comment even questioned whether the physical features of the park could sustain tourism to the park in the absence of buffalo. The use of ear tags or body marking of bison to indicate their brucellosis testing or vaccination status was considered by many as offensive to the natural conditions of the park. However, there were comments that said marking of bison was an acceptable tradeoff if it meant more bison viewing opportunities and maintaining their free-roaming status. Corrals or holding pens were cited as major visual intrusions on the park. The aesthetic purposes of the park were considered incompatible with the manipulation and slaughtering of bison, and when people witness the actual killing of any bison in person or in the media, it is an emotional and traumatic experience. See related comments in Cultural Resources - Landscapes.

#### **Comment 1**

“If we want to view them in the summer, which is consistent with the park’s purpose, we have to let them move around in the winter. And in moving around they need flexible park boundaries. If we strictly limit their winter range to the park, their numbers will be so low as to be just a token and opportunities for bison viewing will decrease...” - Individual, Portland, OR, YELL-14236.

#### **Comment 2**

“The Yellowstone National Park buffalo should not be subjected to roundup, tagging, inoculation, nor anything that might alter their natural appearance. This is in the interest of the park and the large tourist industry. Tourists depend on successful buffalo sightings as part of their Yellowstone National Park experience.” - Individual, Moscow, ID, YELL-3539.

#### **Comment 3**

“Impacts to vegetation and their effects on visual resources were not evaluated: Vegetation resources are affected by bison population size and grazing distribution. The health, abundance, diversity, and botanical composition of plants on the landscape affects the viewshed within Yellowstone National Park and the visual experience of park visitors. Current bison population size and bison management are degrading vegetation resources and related aesthetics within Yellowstone National Park.” - Public Agency, Extension Range Management, Montana State University, YELL-2919.